

**PM Najib is acting women's minister**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
**April 07, 2012**

Prime Minister Najib Razak today announced that he would assume the role of women, family and community development minister.

This follows Wanita Umno chief Shahrizat Abdul Jalil's announcement on March 11 to step down as minister when her term as Dewan Negara member ends on April 8 in the wake of the National Feedlot Corporation scandal.

Najib, who is also finance minister, made the announcement at an event in Temerloh, Pahang today.

The prime minister, however, did not say how long he would be acting in the post. Shahrizat is nevertheless keeping her Wanita Umno chief post.

Najib said Shahrizat had pledged to continue giving her best as Wanita Umno chief.

"Shahrizat has promised me that as Wanita Umno chief, she will assure a big win for the Barisan Nasional in the upcoming general election," he said.

"I dare say that the people are gradually coming back to us, their affection for us is rising.

"Shahrizat emphasised the word 'sayang' (love) during her ministership, if the people give their support, it comes from their minds, but if they give their love, it comes from their hearts.

"When it comes from the heart, the choice will definitely be the one and only (Barisan Nasional)," he said.

Najib said the people would be able to evaluate what had been accomplished by the government in an effort to improve their livelihood through various assistance rendered.

He said the people could also gauge the promises fulfilled by the BN-led government compared to that of the opposition, which had failed to honour their election undertakings.

Shahrizat's key supporter

Najib's announcement today quashes speculation that Selangor Umno Wanita chief Raja Ropiaah was earmarked to stand in as Shahrizat's replacement.

Talk of her possible ministership surfaced when Ropiaah's name cropped up among the five leaders to be sworn in as senators on Monday.

Ropiaah has earlier dismissed the speculations as "tall tales".

"I have not been informed of any appointment to be a minister," she told Malaysiakini when contacted on Friday.

"When I become a senator on Monday, I will carry out my role to my best effort. I don't want to say anything further than that," she said.

Ropiaah, who is a Wanita exco member, is one of several vocal supporters of Shahrizat.

Embattled Wanita chief Shahrizat had received calls from within the wing - in particular deputy Wanita chief Kamilia Ibrahim - to step down over the NFC fiasco involving the alleged abuse of a RM250 million

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Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/194414>



